



ELECTION FOCUS 2008



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America.gov
Telling America's Story

Latest News

[Obama's National Ads in Olympics Seen as Smart Strategy](#) (07-29-2008)

But presidential campaign advertisements could alienate some voters

Presumed Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama's reported plan to run national television advertisements during the August 8-24 Olympic Games might help his campaign but the strategy also carries risks, several sports business consultants tell America.gov. Marc Ganis, who heads Chicago-based SportsCorp Ltd., said he thinks commercials on NBC's Olympic broadcasts could be successful because they will be seen by a "broad cross-section" of Americans.



[Candidate McCain Aims to Revitalize U.S. Global Standing](#) (07-25-2008)

Says foreign policy seeks better, more peaceful world

The United States needs a foreign policy that can revitalize the country's unique purpose and standing in the world, defeat the terrorist threat and build an enduring peace, according to Republican Senator John McCain. "Our next president will need to rally nations across the world around common causes as only America can," McCain said. He has stated he sees defeating terrorism as the national security challenge of our time and Iraq as the central front in this continuing struggle.

Senator John McCain outlines his foreign policy priorities in a speech in Los Angeles.

[Obama Emphasizes Multilateral U.S. Foreign Policymaking](#) (07-25-2008)

Illinois senator urges a responsible end to the Iraq war

The United States must bring the Iraq war to a responsible end and renew American leadership to meet new global challenges and capitalize on new opportunities, Democratic Senator Barack Obama says. "America cannot meet this century's challenges alone; the world cannot meet them without America," Obama says. "Today, we are again called to provide visionary leadership."



Senator Obama, center, meets with his national security advisory group.

[Surrogates' Off-Message Remarks Can Hurt Presidential Candidates](#) (07-24-2008)

Insensitive comments, misstatements, gaffes rock McCain, Obama campaigns

Ill-chosen comments by surrogates for 2008 presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama have rocked both campaigns, political experts tell America.gov. Remarks that conflict with or distract from the message candidates are trying to send voters are a recurring feature of the 2008 presidential race.

Blogs at America.gov - CAMPAIGN TRAIL TALK

<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/>

Provides running commentary and information on the 2008 elections in the United States. This blog keeps readers up to date on news, rumors and political chatter surrounding thousands of political races. Readers may ask questions about the electoral process, post their comments about the candidates, and generally guide the discussion.

From the blog:

[MTV's Street Team 08 – Political eyes on Michigan](#) – By Michelle Austein, 29 July 2008

Swing state Michigan's 17 electoral votes could go to either candidate and "Michigan is finally feeling the love," according to MTV's Michigan reporter, Nadir. Because the state violated the national political parties' rules with an early-primary, campaigns ignored Michigan during the primary season. But now, with the general election under way, John McCain, Barack Obama and their campaign surrogates are regularly visiting the state. See "[Battleground: Michigan](#)."

[With 99 days until Election Day, it's time to advertise](#) – By Michelle Austein, 28 July 2008

As November 4 draws closer, both presidential candidates are rolling out more television ads. Presumed Democratic nominee Barack Obama, with a significant fundraising advantage over Republican rival John McCain, has spent a lot of money running promotions in key battleground states. But the [Washington Times](#) reports recent polls suggest the ads aren't having much impact. For more on why the rising price of gasoline is such a big campaign issue, see "[Americans Feeling Effects of Higher Oil, Gas Prices](#)."

[Campaigning for the U.S presidency ... from Europe](#) – - By Michelle Austein, 25 July 2008

"Tonight, I speak to you not as a candidate for president, but as a citizen – a proud citizen of the United States, and a fellow citizen of the world," presumed Democratic nominee Barack Obama told an estimated 200,000 people in Berlin July 24. Why is Obama spending precious campaign time addressing 200,000 people who don't vote in U.S. elections? Because in an age of satellite communication, the U.S. news media broadcasts that speech right back to millions of American voters. A campaign is about creating compelling images, and Obama's campaign is betting the candidate's rock star appeal with a European crowd will impress the folks back home. Find out more in "[Presidential Candidates' Foreign Trips Matter](#)."

Daily updated information is available at a special **U.S. Elections** page at:

<http://uspolitics.america.gov/uspolitics/elections/>

POLLS

[Obama's Trip a Top Campaign Event for Public](#) - Pew Research Center, July 31, 2008

42% Say Campaign Coverage Biased in Favor of Obama

Despite a high level of public attention to the Democratic candidate's weeklong tour abroad, most said they learned very little of his foreign policy views as a result of the trip.

[Daily Presidential Tracking Poll](#) - Rasmussen Reports, July 31, 2008

The Rasmussen Reports daily Presidential Tracking Poll for Wednesday shows that Barack Obama now attracts 45% of the vote while John McCain earns 43%. When "leaners" are included, it's Obama 48% and McCain 46%.

[Gallup Daily: Presidential Race Tightens to 4 Points](#) - Gallup Poll, July 30, 2008

After moving into a nine percentage point lead over John McCain in Gallup Poll Daily tracking of national registered voters this past weekend, Barack Obama now leads by just four points, 46% to 42%.

[In White House Race, Twice As Many Voters Uncommitted Compared to Four Years Ago](#) –

Rasmussen Reports, July 30, 2008

When given a choice between Barack Obama and John McCain for President, 14% of voters are uncommitted. That figure includes 6% who say they'd vote for some other candidate and 8% who are undecided.

CAMPAIGN 2008



McCain, Obama Tilt Over Taxes - By Laura Meckler. Wall Street Journal, August 1, 2008; Page A5
Sen. John McCain continues to slam rival Barack Obama for wanting to raise taxes Sen. John McCain continues to slam rival Barack Obama for wanting to raise taxes on Social Security, even as he periodically explains that he might be willing to do the same.

McCain Should Run Against Stevens - By John Avlon. Real Clear Politics, July 31, 2008
Senator Ted Stevens' seven-count indictment looks like it couldn't have come at a worse time for the Republican Party, which is already in mid-soul search. But in every crisis there is opportunity - and for John McCain this latest congressional Republican scandal offers an opportunity to revive his reputation as an independent reformer. It has the added advantage of being brand consistent.

Council on Foreign Relations – Issue Trackers

Issue Trackers provide summaries of presidential candidates' positions on an array of foreign policy issues facing the United States. They are updated regularly to reflect changes in candidates' stances. Candidates who have withdrawn from the race continue to be listed in these Issue Trackers, providing an archive of the debate on each subject.

The Candidates on U.S.-Pakistan Policy - Council on Foreign Relations, July 31, 08

Pakistan's domestic crisis has emerged as an important barometer of the foreign policy credentials of U.S. presidential candidates.

The Candidates on Trade - Council on Foreign Relations, July 30, 08

Debate over issues of fair trade, enforcement of labor standards, and trade policy towards developing economies was intensifying as the 2008 presidential campaign unfolded.



A Fork in the Road: Obama, McCain, and Health Care - By Michael Tanner.
CATO Institute Briefing Papers, No. 104, July 29, 2008.

Healthcare reform will be one of the top issues of the 2008 presidential election. In the face of widespread public demand for changes in the U.S. health care system, both Barack Obama and John McCain have offered detailed proposals for reform.

VICE PRESIDENT TIM KAINE? Pros and Cons of a New Dominion Decision – By Larry J. Sabato.
Center for Politics, July 29, 2008

Since the *Crystal Ball* is based in Virginia, and since we have followed Tim Kaine's career since it began on the Richmond City Council in 1994, we'll offer our readers a brief precis on what Kaine would add to the ticket, and what he would not, should the rumors prove accurate.

TRACKING THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION – By Alan I. Abramowitz.

Center for Politics, July 24, 2008

If you're a political junkie like me, and if you're reading this article there's a pretty good chance you are, then you're probably addicted to the Gallup and Rasmussen tracking polls...Lately, though, something's been bothering me about those tracking polls...

The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara was established in 1999 as a collaboration between John Woolley and Gerhard Peters at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Archives contain 77,726 documents related to the study of the Presidency.

More:

Presidential Debates, 1960 - 2008 | | **Presidential Nomination Acceptance Speeches, past and present**

Election Calendar



Republican National Convention

September 1-4, 2008,
Minneapolis - Saint Paul, Minnesota

Democratic National Convention

August 25-28, 2008
Denver, Colorado



ARTICLE ALERT

INBOX. Time, Aug 4, 2008. Vol. 172, Iss. 5; pg. 10

For many, the Democratic race was the culmination of decades of strong, deeply personal feelings about feminism and civil rights, with candidates whose experiences resonated meaningfully with voters. Site selection, roofing and siding materials, landscaping plants, defensible space around the home--all these factors are well-known ways to mitigate much of the risk associated with living in the wildland-urban interface. [FULL TEXT](#)

THE POLITICAL PERILS OF CHANGING YOUR MIND. By Kenneth T Walsh.

U.S. News & World Report, Aug 4, 2008. Vol. 145, Iss. 3; pg. 20

Brookings Institution political scientist Bill Galston, a former adviser to President Bill Clinton, says this is partly a reaction to President Bush's habit of setting a course and not deviating from it. [...] the worst thing a candidate can do is to try to have it both ways, as 2004 Democratic nominee John Kerry appeared to do when he admitted voting for an \$87 billion appropriation for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan before he voted against it. [FULL TEXT](#)

WASHINGTON WHISPERS. By Paul Bedard.

U.S. News & World Report, Aug 4, 2008. Vol. 145, Iss. 3; pg. 12

If the next time you turn on your TV, it flashes news clips of Sen. Barack Obama shopping at Target for a basketball outfit or Sen. John McCain tugging wife Cindy through Sears for a Craftsman hammer, you can probably blame pollster John Zogby. Because the election analyst who first discovered that he could determine voters' political leanings by where they shop has provided Whispers with a new poll of retail outlets, from Neiman Marcus to Boscov's. [FULL TEXT](#)

OBAMA ABROAD; HE'S BEEN CALLED A NAIVE IDEALIST. BUT IN TERMS OF FOREIGN POLICY, HE'S THE TRUE REALIST IN THE RACE. By Fareed Zakaria. Newsweek, Jul 28, 2008. Vol. 152, Iss. 4

Against that backdrop, [Barack Obama] has been strikingly honest about his inclinations and inspirations. True, he begins by praising Harry Truman's administration, which in the foreign-policy world is a little like saying you admire George Washington. (Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and [John McCain] have all cited Truman as a model.) But then Obama takes an unusual step, for a Democrat, and praises the administration of George H.W. [FULL TEXT](#)

Plus - [Google News](#) as well as [Yahoo News](#) on **Elections** updated continuously

UPCOMING EVENTS



Join America.gov's elections experts Michelle Austein and George Burkes

- to discuss the people, processes and issues that shape the U.S. presidential race. They will answer your questions and talk about the latest events on the 2008 campaign trail. [Enter Event & Ask Questions](#)

Date & Time: August 5, 9 a.m. (EDT)

Please note:

The U.S. State Department – IIP (International Information Programs) - is planning to produce and post materials explaining what happens during the transition of the U.S. presidential administrations. We would welcome your thoughts about what you would find most useful.

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